



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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CITY CIVIL COUNSEL ARRESTED FOR HIKING HIS OWN SALARY *-Forged Letter From Mayoral Assistant After \$5,900 Raise Was Denied -*

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), announced the arrest today of MARIO A. VASQUEZ, former Director and General Counsel of the New York City Civil Service Commission (CCSC), for forging an Office of the Mayor official memorandum, thereby fraudulently authorizing an 8% -- or \$5,910 -- managerial raise which he had been previously denied.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "As chief legal officer of the City Civil Service Commission, Mr. Vasquez was not only expected to meet the highest ethical standards; he was sworn to do so. Any betrayal of the public trust is disturbing, but when committed by an attorney and valued agency counselor, it is particularly deplorable. This arrest should send a stern warning to all public servants that official misconduct will not be tolerated, no matter what the position held."

Mr. Kuriansky noted that the investigation began this past October when DOI received information from the Mayor's Office indicating that VASQUEZ may have fabricated an official Mayoral memorandum improperly granting himself a managerial salary increase equal to \$5,910.

The investigation disclosed that, in October 2001, VASQUEZ, like many City managers, was eligible to receive an 8% managerial salary increase -- 4% retroactive to July 1, 2000, and another 4% retroactive to July 1, 2001. Although the agency preliminarily recommended him for a raise, the Mayor's office, on October 12, 2001, sent a memorandum to the CCSC, under the signature of the Assistant to the Mayor, informing the agency that VASQUEZ had not been approved for a salary increase.

Thereafter, VASQUEZ solicited two of the five CCSC commissioners to appeal his raise denial to the Mayor's Office. VASQUEZ received written support from the two CCSC commissioners, but never forwarded their letters to City Hall. Instead, without authority, he fraudulently created a second memorandum, dated October 15, 2001, bearing the photocopied signature of the same Mayoral assistant and purporting to authorize an 8% -- or \$5,910 -- managerial salary increase. VASQUEZ arranged to have the bogus copy delivered to CCSC on October 17, 2001. The scheme was discovered when CCSC personnel contacted the Mayor's Office to confirm the salary adjustment -- which, if not stopped, would have resulted in an immediate lump sum back payment of \$3,646 in his next paycheck.

VASQUEZ, 34, of 187 Pinewood Road, Hartsdale, NY, an employee of CCSC since 1995, was earning an annual salary of \$72,430. He resigned his position on November 2, 2001.

VASQUEZ was charged with Forgery in the Second Degree and Attempted Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, both Class D felonies; and, Official Misconduct and Tampering With Public Records in the Second Degree, both Class A misdemeanors. If convicted, VASQUEZ faces up to seven years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by Julia Davis, DOI's Inspector General for Executive Offices & Non-Mayoral Agencies, and Confidential Investigator Edward J. Richards.

The Office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Elyse C. Ruzow is handling the matter.